



ADAPTATION FUND

# Assessing Progress: Integrating Gender in Adaptation Fund Projects and Programmes



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## Introduction

Over several decades, strong linkages have been made between advancing gender equality and progressing sustainable development and environmental management. These links are anchored in global frameworks that promote women's rights and empowerment as well as gender equality within the context of sustainable development, environmental management, and now climate change, with ever-increasing evidence-base of the differentiated issues and impacts faced by women and men. Not only is gender equality a universal human rights goal in and of itself, but imperative in achieving the goals across sectors and addressing issues as climate change presents an unprecedented global challenge for sustainable development. The interlinkages of gender equality and climate change have gained momentum and more prominence within research, policy dialogues, climate change negotiations, and climate action by a variety of implementers.

## Objective

The study aims to provide an overview of lessons on mainstreaming gender in select projects funded by the Adaptation Fund of value to those working in this field. It is up to the reader to decide what lessons apply in their context specific situation. The report captures knowledge to support accelerating learning on effective women's empowerment and gender-responsive adaptation strategies and measures throughout a project's lifecycle.

The study builds on the foundational work of the Adaptation Fund to facilitate gender mainstreaming in policy and planning, supporting implementing entities in their efforts to enhance gender in practice, and learning from projects. Lessons learned presented in this study resulting from a select number of projects will allow implementing entities, government officials, private sector, civil society groups, and other stakeholders as well as the public to enhance project-level learning and facilitate increased action and impact through implementation of women's empowerment and gender inclusive practices.



## Getting Gender in Climate Adaptation

Mainstreaming gender in climate adaptation is a matter of equity and fairness, and a moral obligation for sustainable development. At the same time, mainstreaming gender is needed to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of adaptation efforts.

Mainstreaming gender in adaptation is an acknowledgement of women's rights as unalienable human rights and aligns with the existing obligations of almost all UNFCCC Parties to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)<sup>1</sup> and other cornerstones of human rights covenants,<sup>2</sup> including the 4th World Conference on Women in 1995, resulting in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action<sup>3</sup> which included reference to global warming within its framework of Strategic Objective on Women and the Environment. This indicated an initial linkage and concern for gender differentiated linkages and impacts that could occur and means of implementation for addressing this.

This international framework for action on human rights and gender equality began to be integrated into environment protection with the establishment of the three Rio Conventions in the early 1990s. The UN Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD), and the UN Convention on Combating Desertification (UNCCD) included key elements recognizing women's critical economic, social and environmental contributions to environmental management and sustainable development; but the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) at its inception did not. Nonetheless, the foundation of international conventions and norms furthered the recognition of the social and gender dimensions of environment and development. Momentum grew linking gender and climate change, from the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 (HFA) and then updated Sendai Framework for Action 2015-2030 on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), to Indigenous Peoples Rights (UNDRIP)(2007), to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).<sup>4</sup>

While the UNFCCC itself did not integrate gender concerns from the outset, great strides have been made by Parties in

recent years to agree on decisions that include mandates on key gender issues. The Cancun Adaptation Framework (Decision 1/CP.16) in 2010, was an earlier decision affirming adaptation be addressed equally in climate change implementation of the Convention, and it also recognizes the integration of human rights, and that "gender equality and the effective participation of women and indigenous peoples are important for effective action on all aspects of climate change." This was followed by the landmark UNFCCC 2012 Decision 23/CP.18 on gender balance and women's participation, which included gender mandates for a host of implementation activities, as well as reaffirming commitments and establishing gender as a standing agenda item for the COP. Of significant and more recent note, in 2014 during COP 20, the Lima Work Programme on Gender (Decision 18/CP.20) was adopted, establishing a two-year work programme, which supported inclusion of gender equality language within the Paris Agreement,<sup>5</sup> and paved the way for establishing the first UNFCCC Gender Action Plan (GAP) in 2017 (Decision 3/CP.23).

The Parties to the UNFCCC decision on the first ever GAP "seeks to advance women's full, equal and meaningful participation and promote gender-responsive climate policy and the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation of the Convention and the work of Parties, the secretariat, United Nations entities and all stakeholders at all levels."<sup>6</sup> It also notes that further strengthening is required in all activities concerning adaptation, mitigation, and related means of implementation—with a particular priority area on such, including strengthening the capacity of finance mechanisms on gender.

As a climate finance mechanism created under the Kyoto Protocol and started serving the Paris Agreement,<sup>7</sup> the Adaptation Fund—along with all other UNFCCC constituted bodies—is tasked with upholding and delivering on these decisions. In support of these guiding decisions and the international framework on gender and climate change, the Fund has instated certain policies and accountability mechanisms to ensure gender equality is enhanced and mainstreamed across its investments.

1. CEDAW is an international treaty adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly. Described as an international bill of rights for women, it was instituted on 3 September 1981 and has been ratified by 189 states.

2. The Human Rights Commission produced two major documents to support the unbinding Universal Declaration of Human Rights: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Both covenants proclaim these rights for all people and forbid discrimination.

3. UN Women. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. [http://beijing20.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/pfa\\_e\\_final\\_web.pdf](http://beijing20.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/pfa_e_final_web.pdf)

4. The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. A functional commission of the Economic and Social

Council (ECOSOC), it was established by Council resolution 11(II) of 21 June 1946. In 1996, ECOSOC in resolution 1996/6 expanded the Commission's mandate and decided that it should take a leading role in monitoring and reviewing progress and problems in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and in mainstreaming a gender perspective in UN activities.

5. The Paris Agreement acknowledges in the preamble that climate change is a common concern for human kind, noting Parties' "actions to address climate change respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights...gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity."

6. UNFCCC. 2017. Report of the Conference of the Parties on its twenty-third session. Pp. 15.

7. By Decision 13/CMA.1 and Decision 1/CMP.14, the Adaptation Fund started serving the Paris Agreement as of January 1, 2019.



Connecting project beneficiaries to markets. Portfolio monitoring mission in Rwanda. Photo by Adaptation Fund

### A Framework for Integrating Gender

Attention to gender equality and women's empowerment in projects/programmes has evolved in the Adaptation Fund since its establishment. Building on the Fund's foundational principles, and global advocacy efforts, a framework now exists for integrating gender in climate adaptation interventions and processes. Prior to the Fund adopting its own Gender Policy and Action Plan in March 2016, project proposals submitted by its implementing entities already included gender considerations, but in a manner that was not consistent and only covered some aspects of gender considerations. However, aspects such as disaggregation of project results by gender were mandatory since 2011. Through continued learning, the Adaptation Fund Board (the Board) addressed this by updating the Fund's operational policies and guidelines (OPG) to require implementing entities to include gender considerations in project planning and stakeholder consultation processes, and for them to demonstrate this in the project proposals they submit to the Fund.

In November 2013, the Board approved the Environmental and Social Policy (ESP) of the Fund, which signified the Board's commitment to curbing adverse impacts from environmental and social harms that may be caused by projects and programmes funded by the Fund. The ESP, which the Board also amended in March 2016 in line with the approved Gender Policy of the Fund, addresses the need for environmental and social safeguards at project design with a specific principle on "gender equity and women's empowerment" which subsequently initiated a reconfiguring of the Fund's project proposal template.<sup>8</sup> In the funding template, all implementing entities are specifically requested to detail the gender considerations relevant for enhancing project and programme economic, social and environmental benefits, especially geared toward the most vulnerable communities. The Board, through the Fund's Readiness Programme for Climate Finance (Readiness Programme), provides support to Implementing Entities for institutional strengthening and capacity-building to address environmental and social risks and include gender considerations in the design and development of projects and programmes in compliance with the principles and considerations outlined in the ESP. This support, which is available to NIEs only, is delivered in the form of a technical assistance grant for the environmental and social policy and gender policy (TA-ESGP), which is a grant to address environmental and social safeguards and

gender considerations simultaneously, and through the technical assistance grant for the gender policy (TA-GP), for use by NIEs that already have strong environmental and social safeguards in place, but would like to integrate gender into these and mainstream gender at the institutional level. This also has the benefit of raising the profile on gender elements to be considered and integrated in Fund investments.<sup>9</sup> Building upon the ESP, the Gender Policy and multi-year Action Plan, adopted in March 2016 solidifies the Fund's goals on advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, with specific actions, aligning the Fund increasingly with the UNFCCC across decisions and its mechanisms. The Guidance Document for Implementing Entities on Compliance with the Adaptation Fund Gender Policy provides practical guidance and particular actions that could enhance the consideration of gender issues in projects and programmes funded by the Fund, and an updated Project Performance Report (PPR) template now includes a default reporting requirement on compliance with the Fund's Gender Policy. This revision to the PPR in 2019 includes reporting on quality at entry, as well as during implementation and closure, implementing arrangements, and grievance mechanisms to enhance the results, and provide additional information on how gender has been integrated, specific approaches, the impact and lessons learned.

8. Adaptation Fund. 2013. Environmental and Social Policy.

9. <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/readiness/readiness-grants/technical-assistance-grants/>

## Continuing Learning and Sharing on Gender

Alongside the Fund's progress on gender, the Adaptation Fund Board adopted in 2017 the Medium-term Strategy 2018-2022 (MTS), aimed at enhancing and strengthening the Fund's approach to serve country Parties to the UNFCCC, and the most climate-vulnerable groups of people. The MTS builds on the comprehensive foundation of the Fund that currently exists after a decade of implementation and knowledge generation, and aims to continue to guide this through its three strategic pillars: Action, Innovation, and Learning and Sharing. It outlines the Fund's current activities designed to engage, empower, and benefit the most vulnerable communities and social groups, with cross-cutting themes promoting the advancement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and strengthening institutional and technical capacity in the long term to enhance adaptation.

In complement to the efforts the Fund has made in advancing mainstreaming of gender considerations in policy, planning and implementation of projects and programmes, the Fund has also developed over the years multiple knowledge products to support continued learning and sharing of experiences related to advancing a gender-responsive approach. Efforts to increase outreach and dissemination of learning at the Fund on gender aspects, have resulted in a diverse array of resources to facilitate collaborative learning and sharing on gender issues across adaptation communities of practice. This outreach and dissemination has included developing: knowledge briefs and infographics with concise data on gender integration in projects linked with and driving the Gender Policy and ESP;<sup>10</sup> as well as videos<sup>11</sup> sharing implementation approaches and impact of mainstreaming gender elements. As part of implementing the Learning and Sharing pillar of the MTS, an online knowledge platform was also developed. The Fund's newly implemented online microsite on knowledge aims to include information and diverse resources on specific themes with gender chosen as one of the priority themes where all the aforementioned resources have been populated and are openly accessible to users.<sup>12</sup>

Webinars for readiness support held by the Fund have also included elements to enhance capacity on gender issues for National Implementing Entities.<sup>13</sup>

10. Adaptation Fund. 2018. Advancing Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls; & Protecting the Environment and Engaging the Most Vulnerable Communities and Social Groups. <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/pdfs/web/viewer.html?file=https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/AF-Gender-Environment-06.2018-WEB.pdf>. For Adaptation Fund Environmental and Social Policy, see [https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Amended-March-2016\\_-\\_OPG-ANNEX-3-Environmental-social-policy-March-2016.pdf](https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Amended-March-2016_-_OPG-ANNEX-3-Environmental-social-policy-March-2016.pdf).



Colombia. Women demonstrating mobile home gardens that can be moved in the event of a flood.  
Photo by Adaptation Fund

## Implementing Projects and Programmes with a Gender Lens

The framework in place by the Adaptation Fund to address gender issues and efforts on raising knowledge have increased the visibility and awareness that gender considerations and responses be key criteria in delivering adaptation investment results. The Fund has made strides, expanding beyond the prerequisite “what” of gender inequalities, recognizing that differentiated roles, knowledge, and responses are imperative to identifying and contributing to the solutions for the most vulnerable and marginalized in combatting climate change. Identifying and sharing the approaches that ensure women are engaged, gender is mainstreamed and women's rights and gender equality is advanced is not only right and just, but fundamental for making progress and achieving climate targets, and the sustainable development goals.

The following cases highlight the diverse and innovative approaches Adaptation Fund projects and programmes have taken to ensure gender equality and women's empowerment are considered and integrated. They also show the impacts gender-responsive adaptation approaches have had on project outcomes for climate—and the most vulnerable communities—adaptation and resilience. It is worth noting that these projects were approved, and their implementation commenced before the Adaptation Fund GP and Gender Action Plan (GAP) were approved by the Board in March 2016.

11. Adaptation Fund. 2016. Gender: A Pivotal Difference Maker in Adaptation Fund Projects. <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/gender-pivotal-difference-maker-adaptation-fund-projects/>  
12. Adaptation Fund. Knowledge Themes: Gender. <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/knowledge-learning/knowledge-themes/gender/>  
13. Adaptation Fund. 2018. Adaptation Fund Webinar to Share Country Experiences in Environmental, Social and Gender Approaches to Projects.

# Mongolia: Ecosystem Based Adaptation Approach to Maintaining Water Security in Critical Water Catchments in Mongolia, implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), US\$5,500,000



Project team discussing with representatives of herders in a traditional ger (yurt).  
Photo by Adaptation Fund

## Project Background

Extreme weather events, from droughts to flash flooding and harsh winters, coupled with unsustainable agriculture, herding and development practices have left particularly the rural population of Mongolia highly vulnerable to environmental and economic risks. Communities struggle to adapt to drier climates, fewer water resources, and livestock losses, amid political and economic pressure for commercialization of agriculture disrupting a traditional way of life, and accelerating land and ecosystem degradation.

Ecosystem-based adaptation (EBA) approaches were begun in 2012 to support herders' and small-scale agriculturalists' survival, and environmental health, of whom many are single parent, female headed households (FHH). Implemented by UNDP and coordinated with the Ministry of Nature, Environment and Tourism, the project focused on maintaining and enhancing critical water catchments and transferring water conservation technologies with capacity building activities for stakeholders, while synergizing national policy and planning on climate and water resources to improve livelihoods and risk management.

## Strategies Employed

This project was focused on extremely impoverished and vulnerable groups of nomadic herders, and small-scale agriculturalists, often single-parent women, with the aim of strengthening ecological and social well-being. Project activities aimed at building women stakeholders' awareness and capacity to participate in decision-making, improve business acumen, and implement EBA responses to support more sustainable land practices for which they depend upon for their livelihoods.

The project took on a human rights-based approach to include FHH, single parents, and disabled individuals, supporting an inclusive approach for marginalized groups during demonstration activities, and as potential beneficiaries, but also targeting women's participation in the community EBA groups, and also ensuring they become group leaders.

The women and men in farmer cooperatives participated in skill-building trainings to learn water-saving irrigation approaches, pasture rotation, organic gardening and agroforestry techniques that prevented soil erosion.

GAP was created for the project to help with increasing income generation through the ecologically oriented

household farming and wool production. The GAP played a significant part in defining which interventions would support specific progress on reducing gender inequalities,<sup>14</sup> and was subsequently updated in following years, with support and recommendations provided by the gender advisor from the Regional UNDP office.<sup>15</sup>

Income diversification strategies defined by the GAP were implemented with women's cooperatives that were engaged in training sessions to build new skills in felting and greenhouse production. Ethnic groups who were not familiar with the cultural practice of felting were targeted to receive training on producing felt and felt products—for utility or décor—from the herds' wool provided for additional income. Women in the EBA Groups were also trained and took up the majority role of water technicians at the water monitoring stations installed as part of the project.

In 2017, the GAP of the project focused on ensuring husbands in the communities increasingly supported family businesses, whereby household surveys were conducted to assess the gender impacts of the ongoing activities with a particular focus on women's income, and the level of men's awareness of factors affecting the support of family business and income generation.

Following the Mid-Term Evaluation Report (MTE/MTR) (2015), women's working conditions were enhanced and planned activities targeted to support their needs included heated facilities for the water monitoring stations and indoor toilets. In addition, women's availability (particularly seasonally) to arrange off-site trainings were considered.<sup>16</sup>

## Achievements

■ Women in the communities where EBA approaches were being implemented were targeted for participation in the community EBA groups, and reportedly 77 of 149 groups were led by women.<sup>17</sup>

■ Trainings for small-scale farming adaptation techniques, and tree planting training had equal participation of women and men. Fire prevention training was also provided to community groups and cooperatives, with an 80% participation of men, and the felting workshops were 100% women.<sup>18</sup>

■ Women and men received trainings on developing and using greenhouses with drip irrigation (as opposed to rain-fed agriculture), providing women increasing reliability on produce during harsher seasons for families, but also for income—particularly for higher-priced items such as strawberries, and vegetables for pickling and storing.<sup>19</sup> The farming cooperatives have led to a marked expansion in the variety of vegetables and fruits grown and available, and sharing of lessons with neighboring farmers.

14. Project Performance Report (PPR) Mongolia 2016  
15. PPR Mongolia. 2017  
16. PPR Mongolia 2015.  
17. PPR Mongolia. 2017.  
18. PPR Mongolia. 2014.  
19. MTE/MTR Mongolia. 2015



Mongolia. Project beneficiary at Uvs lake monitoring post.  
Photo by Adaptation Fund

■ The training for women's cooperatives in felting and greenhouse gardening provided an increase in income for participant members, and subsequently they were also provided with financial management training. Through the contained project effort and field level activities, more than 300 women have permanent income to support their livelihoods as of 2017, after five years of project implementation.<sup>20</sup>

■ The environmental restoration including spring protection and technology transfer produced ecological sustainability as the main benefit, substantially improving the water quantity and quality. Water purification prior to cooking and drinking became unnecessary, contributing to health and sanitation co-benefits, and workloads were reduced for men and women in on- and off-farm activities..<sup>21</sup>

■ Surveys conducted at the household level in 17 of the target communities and over 340,000 households demonstrated that while 15.2% of women reported an increase in their income due to project activities, 24% of husbands cited interest to support their family businesses, an increase from 11% on a previous survey, and enable women's leadership.<sup>22</sup>

### Lessons Learned

**Ownership in communities and inclusive participation of women and other vulnerable groups** through creation of important associations (e.g. water-user and pasture-user associations, vegetable grower associations, social support entities and enterprises) **is conducive to increasing sustainability of project efforts and achievements.** Associations enable collaborative and collective work in addressing environmental degradation and climate risks. They also provide a space for targeted consideration of social dynamics, with women's participation and economic empowerment encouraged, influencing men's behavior change.

**Systemic issues need to be closely addressed through participatory analysis and further advanced in project design and implementation to increase overall project benefits.** Women receiving income-diversification training have reportedly increased their economic status and well-being. Nevertheless, men's access to income generating activities was more lucrative. While women own the herds, most of the income for herding is earned by men in Mongolia which often is related to over-arching gender relations and dynamics in the households and communities.

20. PPR Mongolia. 2017.

21. PPR Mongolia. 2016.

22. PPR Mongolia. 2017.

**Evaluation and redesign allowed for elements outlined in the MTR to be considered and integrated into the project as new activities to support the needs and priorities of women,** particularly in the installation of heating for the water monitoring stations, and cooperative sites where women were participating in project trainings and activities.

## Morocco: Climate Change Adaptation Project in Oasis Zone (PACC-ZO), Implemented by Agence pour le Developpement Agricole (ADA), US\$9,970,000



Project beneficiary at the project site. Field monitoring mission in Morocco.  
Photo by the Adaptation Fund

### Project Background

The oasis zone in southern Morocco is experiencing degradation from climate change compounded by population and urbanization pressure. The region is suffering from lack of rain, and overexploitation of the water table with increasingly threatening risk of desertification, having a detrimental impact on the agricultural production in the area, and the livelihoods of the women and men in the communities.

This project, PACC-ZO aims to build the adaptive capacities to generate and manage water in a sustainable way, to support diversifying income sources for enhanced living conditions. Utilizing water-recapture mechanisms and rehabilitating irrigation channels to protect against short to long-term droughts, while also mediate flooding risks too. Opportunities for the most vulnerable community members are being created through different user groups and community associations for capacity building and benefit sharing, and building environmental resilience.

### Strategies Employed

The vulnerability of the oasis communities is amplified by cultural barriers whereby men migrate in search of resources and livelihoods, leaving women, youth, and the elderly as the permanent residents in the oasis, contributing to the most vulnerable populations at heightened risk. During the consultation and planning phase of the project, women's increased vulnerability in the oases was recognized owing to specific consultation and engagement of associations and women's cooperatives. A portion of representatives from the groups consulted also participated then in the project initiation workshop to amplify their voices and priorities for the project's implementation.

Trainings for women, men and youth in the regions of the project have been key for building knowledge of adaptation measures, and diversifying income sources to improve their living conditions. The women's associations have received trainings on water management, and are participating in the water user groups, poised to be at the table for community decision making for resources.

The PACC-ZO project has strengthened women's participation into farming cooperatives and women's associations compared to the limited role women previously had in agricultural production which was exacerbated by extended droughts. The project has delivered trainings to the farmer cooperatives, and women's associations specifically for teaching new skills in the agricultural value chains.

### Achievements

- Consultation with women's groups and leaders of women's associations in the planning stage ensured itemized budget lines specifically targeting increasing and diversifying women's economic livelihoods. 19% of inception workshop

participants were women, including those from women's associations, with a target of reaching at least 50% women by completion of the project for sustainability of adaptation measures.

- Women have been provided access to participation in consultations, decisions-making spheres, and skills-training all contributing to their social and economic empowerment in the community.

- The establishment of the cooperatives have increased their independence and ability to earn monthly income to provide for the needs of their families, and also build savings within the cooperatives for future endeavors. Women are reportedly working harder, enjoying the cooperatives and looking to expand activities beyond the project's region to grow their businesses in a sustainable manner to adapt to climate change.

*"Prior to this co-op, women were not used to leaving their homes. Now you have lots of women working for the co-op, and earning a monthly income. It's a big transformation, and you can see that these women have a different lifestyle now."* — Soumya Laouane, a member of the Nissae El Ghad Women of Tomorrow Cooperative in Tighfert, Ferkla Soufla, Errachidia.

- Trainings provided to the women's associations and farmer cooperatives have increased production and sustainable marketing of organic products for the regions—from cooking oils, spices, and cereals, to honey and alfalfa. Women and girls are also learning how to weave in classes provided to the associations, and cooking classes. Community members are eager to learn these skills to drive additional tourism in the area, and be able to provide high-priced commodities.

### Lessons Learned

**Strong engagement of local associations has developed a sense of ownership in the community and continuing momentum to enhance the environmental, as well as socio-economic outcomes.**

**Providing grants has enabled women to invest their time and energy to expand their livelihoods.** The seed funding allowed community members, especially women, to gain confidence in other livelihood opportunities, receive trainings on diversifying income, and jump-start the activities of their interest. Promotion of non-agricultural economic activities with young people, men and women are creating sources of income in sectors that do not put pressure on the communities' natural resources.

**Equal access to knowledge on climate adaptation measures empowered men and women in climate adaptation who may have been historically and culturally excluded** and marginalized from not only income generating activities but also decision-making and leadership roles.



School children receiving awareness on climate change threats. Field monitoring mission in Ecuador.  
Photo by Adaptation Fund



**Ecuador:** Enhancing resilience of communities to the adverse effects of climate change on food security, in Pichincha Province and the Jubones River basin (FORECCSA), implemented by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), US\$7,449,468

## Project Background

Chronic malnutrition has affected many communities in the Pichincha Province of Ecuador, and climate change is exacerbating this, as small-scale farmers in communities are unable to provide adequate food. Increasing occurrences of droughts, coupled with limited or no access to capital, markets, or effective farming techniques and infrastructure have left nearly half of the communities in the area challenged to cope with climate change, food security and maintaining their livelihood.

In 2012 the FORECCSA got underway to reduce the food insecurity and climate vulnerability of the Ecuadorian communities whose ecosystems and livelihoods are most threatened by the adverse impacts of climate change in the Pichincha Province and River Basin.<sup>23</sup> The project is implemented through partnerships with the Ministry of Agriculture and the World Food Programme (WFP), with the local actors Jubones River Basin Public Consortium and the Provincial Government of Pichincha. The project, through various adaptation interventions, focused on involving local communities in determining which types of infrastructure would best protect them from water-related climate impacts and secure water access. Engagement with the local communities, with specific emphasis on indigenous groups and women, aimed to build the knowledge and resilience of the affected communities to climate change and food insecurity risks. Promoting ownership of the project with the local communities was designed to reduce recurrent risks on the most vulnerable through their capacity building and participation in decision making on climate solutions.<sup>24</sup>

## Strategies Employed

The FORECCSA project, focused on water access, food security, and resilience, recognized the need for linking climate adaptation with critical gender components for positive outcomes from the beginning of the project concept, and continued throughout implementation. Developing this cross-sectoral approach and mainstreaming gender are key strategies of the project, necessitating involvement of multiple stakeholders at various levels.

The project began with a framework to integrate the cross-cutting issues of food security and gender considerations

in all adaptation training programmes, and awareness campaigns.<sup>25</sup> This was included in the early stages of the project through conducting a baseline study to determine the knowledge level on climate change, food security and gender in 50 parishes of the project area, and the inherent risks. In response to limited information and knowledge, the project designed a local capacity building strategy and training modules on the issues, links, and impacts which was followed by including indicators to facilitate a gender-sensitive approach and empowerment for vulnerable communities.<sup>26</sup>

Another element was educating and building the capacity of project staff and local government through training on climate adaptation, food and nutrition security, food sovereignty and women's empowerment. In building the capacity of the project implementers, in addition to both the women and men in the community, recognition of the benefits of a gender approach was made clear. The increased deployment of measures including trainings, led to enhanced women's participation in community adaptation planning and decision-making.<sup>27</sup> This included identifying the participation limitations of local women, and encouraging their presence among local community leaders; promoting their voice in all of the activities, valuing their opinions and suggestions, and registering their attendance and inputs; while also increasing community men's awareness on issues as well.<sup>28</sup>

A key strategy supporting these actions and others, was the establishment of an alliance by WFP with UN Women and their gender experts. UN Women provided technical expertise to guide and support mainstreaming gender across the project's adaptation measures in a more systematic and comprehensive approach. UN Women designed a Gender Strategy for all phases of the project, and organized gender analyses and case studies in ten of the project regions contextualizing gender dynamics and opportunities for facilitating increased engagement of women and men across groups.<sup>29</sup> UN Women also supported the project in developing gender mainstreaming tools, methodologies and indicators which were integrated in the project's logical framework for strengthening the adaptation results, via enhanced gender integration.<sup>30</sup>

Technical capacity building targeting women smallholder farmers, especially indigenous women and women in female headed households (FHH), was conducted with the goal of increasing access to extension and market services. Given that they face more obstacles in selling their products than men, skills training promoted women farmers' leadership and economic empowerment, as well as providing more holistic technical inputs for building their individual and household resilience to climate impacts.<sup>31</sup>

23. WFP. <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000063609/download/>  
<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Country%20Brief%20Ecuador%20October%202015%20HQ%20cleared.pdf>

24. PRODOC

25. 2013 PPR

26. WFP. 2017. <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000063609/download/>

27. PPR Ecuador. 2017.

28. PPR Ecuador. 2013

29. MTR Ecuador. 2015

30. WFP. 2017. <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000063609/download/>



Project beneficiaries benefitting from concrete adaptation measures focused on irrigation and drainage system. Field monitoring mission in Ecuador.  
Photo by Adaptation Fund

## Achievements

■ Training project staff on gender issues has proven to be an important tool to generate knowledge, develop skills and raise awareness on the why, and how-to mainstream gender. As a result, staff have shown increased ownership of, and commitment to the project, moving beyond a theoretical notion through linking or recognizing gender considerations, and applying techniques that also provide results on good practices.<sup>32</sup>

■ 49 Adaptation Plans, in as many parishes, developed by local governments to align with their Development Plans, include climate change as a priority, with an emphasis on gender considerations and food security included.

■ 53% of workshop participants in planning and designing the aforementioned 49 Adaptation Plans were women, with their differentiated experiences and priorities reflected. Exceeding the target indicator of 40% for women's participation is credited to specific awareness-raising and methods utilized by project staff to engage marginalized and vulnerable groups, among them women and FHH representatives.<sup>33</sup>

■ Water infrastructure developed as an adaptive management measure, including water storage and irrigation channels, has reduced women's workloads in water collection and enhanced food production. Testimonies from community women indicate the project has contributed to the empowerment of women in terms of improved access and control of resources and decision-making at the household level—extending beyond the FORECCSA project.<sup>34</sup>

*"Before being part of the project, I had to walk several hours a day to collect the water I used for cultivation and preparation of my family's food...The daily water supply that I receive has allowed me to incorporate new products into my harvest, such as legumes and vegetables." —María Mercedes, FORECCSA beneficiary.<sup>35</sup>*

■ Cultural spaces were built to integrate traditional knowledge and practices and promote inter-generational learning, with participation of women, youth and community elders. This encouraged home gardens to utilize the shared indigenous knowledge and practices (e.g., plant species selection and organic fertilizer) to enhance climate resilience and support families with access to nutritional and secure food production post-project.<sup>36</sup>

32. PPR Ecuador. 2017.

33. PPR Ecuador. 2017.

34. <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/adaptation-fund-side-event-showcases-environmental-social-policies-helping-ensure-focus-vulnerable/>

35. WFP. <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000063609/download/>  
<https://insight.wfp.org/the-climate-is-changing-and-so-are-we-72929e9a0d49>

36. AF. 2017. <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/proactive-focus-environment-social-gender-policies/>

37. <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000063609/download/>

38. WFP. 2017. <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000063609/download/>

■ Expanding the knowledge of indigenous and FHH representatives through practical applications of adaptive responses, as well as training on market and economic opportunities, WFP reported that it has made a significant impact on household incomes, allowing increased autonomy in the community.<sup>37</sup>

■ The first National Meeting of Rural Women took place in Ecuador with over 1500 rural women participants, providing a formal discussion platform to share major concerns from a rural perspective directly with government institution representatives. FORECCSA project staff participated highlighting the importance of the women's role in tackling climate change and food insecurity, with women reporting an increased understanding on the linkages. A working document was developed post-meeting and is the basis for ongoing actions to improve rural women's livelihoods, through continued knowledge sharing, such as from the FORECCSA project.<sup>38</sup>

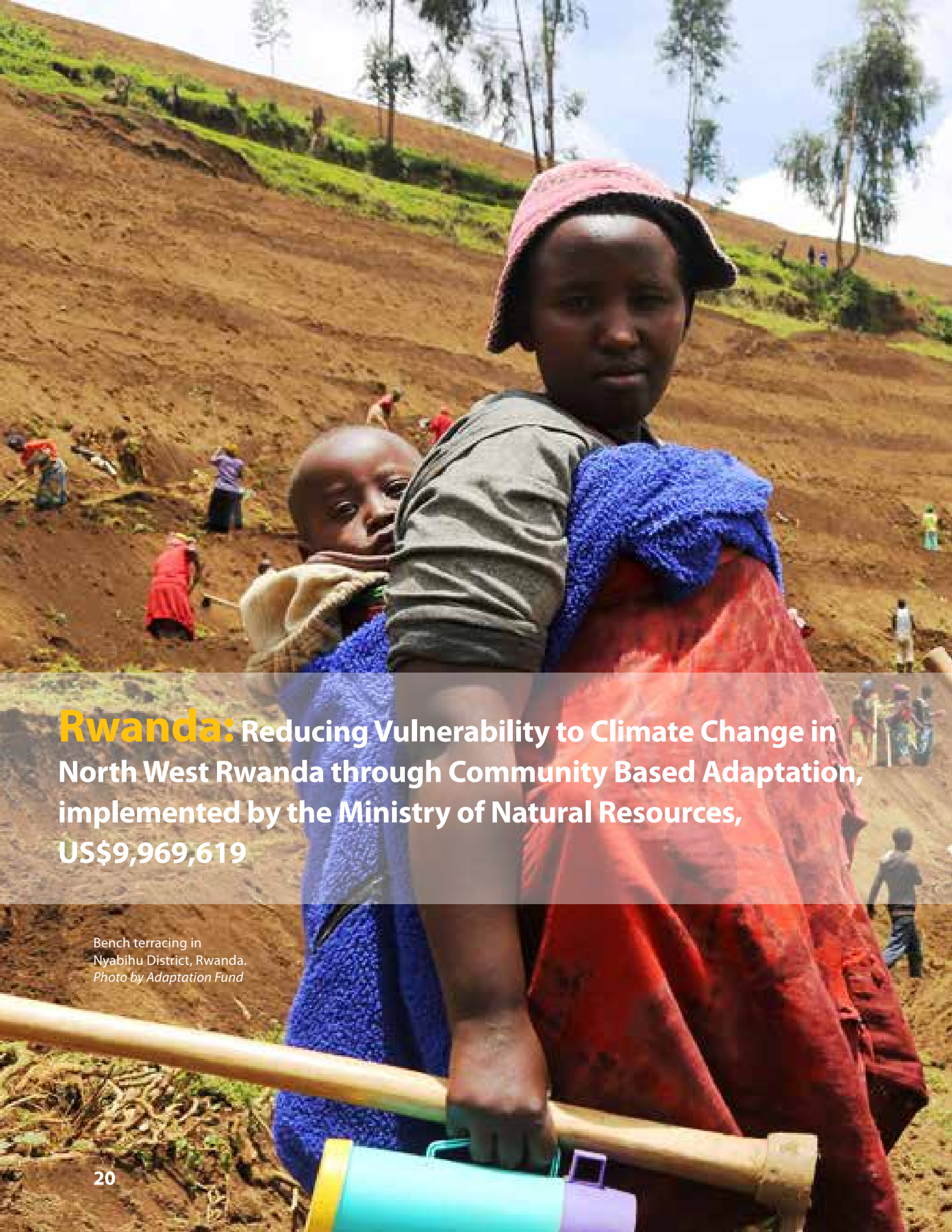
■ 275 technicians from local governments and national entities have been trained to build local capacity to manage local climate change priorities, including training on linkages with gender, supporting increased ownership and implementation of a gender-inclusive approach in various climate actions.

## Lessons Learned

**Raising awareness and building capacity among national and local stakeholders** on the impacts of climate change and food security, and cross-cutting gender dynamics, **strengthened efforts to implement appropriate responses to threats of the targeted population** that did not exclude particular groups, or exacerbate economic hardship or inequities among the groups.

**Local stakeholder engagement supported ownership and interest in climate planning and policy development at local levels**, and targeting women's groups participation and sharing of differentiated experiences and priorities ensured their voice and needs were incorporated into local government climate plans.

**Partnering with and facilitating gender expertise, such as with UN Women, provided robust and more comprehensive gender integration in project components.** This ensured strategic development and technical guidance for integrating a gender-responsive approach across the project framework, including ongoing evaluation and learning to inform re-design, action implementation, knowledge sharing, and outcomes.



## Rwanda: Reducing Vulnerability to Climate Change in North West Rwanda through Community Based Adaptation, implemented by the Ministry of Natural Resources, US\$9,969,619

Bench terracing in Nyabihu District, Rwanda. Photo by Adaptation Fund

### Project Background

Rwanda's high reliance on rain-fed agriculture and increasingly dense rural populations have pushed farmers into smaller, and more risky plots, and unplanned settlements that have been degrading the hilly and mountainous terrain. The onset of climate impacts in the Northern and Western upland highlands—considered the most vulnerable to erosion due to the steep terrain and higher annual rainfall—with heavy rainfall is exacerbating the impact of the unsustainable farming practices and settlements.

This project focuses on increasing the adaptive capacity of the rural communities and natural systems exposed to the detrimental climate and human impacts. It aims to do this through integrated natural resource management and developing alternative livelihoods, as well as supporting sustainable settlements. This multi-faceted approach restores the ecosystem by reducing the factors exacerbating the effects of intense rainfall leading to floods and landslides, affecting the most impoverished communities.

### Strategies Employed

The project initiated a thorough gender analysis at the onset of the design phase. Project design was thus informed through diverse stakeholder engagement which highlighted critical information on gender-differentiated resource use, needs, interests, and power relations. The analysis was used to integrate gender-sensitive approaches in the project design, with gender disaggregated indicators as part of the project framework, aiming to distribute project benefits equitably.

A critical element in the gender analysis, and design of gender-sensitive elements of the project, was the engagement of Rwanda's National Women's Council (NWC). The NWC representation from the national level, to local level, with supporting staff members in some districts, made the organization and local representatives critical stakeholders for continued consultation to inform the project on the context of gender dynamics, community needs, and collaborate in planning and policy development more comprehensively. Also supported in the design of the project to enhance awareness on gender equality and women's rights was the strategy for ensuring gender parity in the recruitment of project staff. This supported women with technical programmatic skills to gain equitable access to project management and leadership of the staff team. Training of the project staff, as well as community animators, government and NGOs on gender-sensitive adaptation planning further instated awareness on gender issues in the project and community.

39. PPR3. Rwanda.

40. PPR2. Rwanda.

41. Adaptation Fund. Rwanda Project in Action. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SuYk-UiL0es>

42. PPR3. Rwanda.

To support the project objective of diversifying income opportunities in the region, local community members were hired as laborers in project interventions, for digging trenches for the canals, and terracing the hill and mountain-side for restoration and agroforestry, among other activities. For this, project staff prioritized hiring women to participate in these measures ensuring an equitable representation, and wage. With the income, men and women participants were encouraged to open savings accounts and participate in Self-Help Groups (SHG).

The project specifically targeted the poorest households at high risk from repeated environmental disasters to relocate to the green village being constructed. FHHs, a large proportion of the poorest families in Rwanda, were prioritized to be relocated to the village, and to learn about crop diversification, and soil and water management techniques to build their individual adaptive capacity in the new settlement. Providing skills for more economic empowerment and security, also encouraged interest by the FHHs to participate in community decision-making processes to represent their interests, where they had been historically and culturally marginalized previously.

Youth were also supported in the project through an innovative feature to support vocational skills-training, providing technical abilities and encouraging young women and men to pursue income options beyond the farm.

### Achievements

■ Community volunteers were recruited and trained to be community animators. With an equal number of women and men, the animators are responsible for all outreach to communities in the project area, and given bicycles to support their role.

■ The project reportedly hired a work force of 3407 people to implement adaptive measures, of which 63% were women.<sup>39</sup> Continued efforts to expand farmer training and diversify livelihoods led to high value crop production; diversification of livelihoods — apiculture, poultry and livestock management; and 45 members of a women's cooperative becoming engaged in off-farm activities such as making baskets from plastic raw materials, solid and liquid soaps.<sup>40</sup>

■ Project results identify approximately 12,000 women and 9,000 men as having a new source of income from project initiatives. As a result of having additional income, majority of both women and men were able to open savings accounts in the cooperatives. Women noted they contribute monthly,<sup>41</sup> and are able to access credit as farmers to support investment in their house and farm, and also explore entrepreneurship. Reportedly 167 women's association



members invested in new opportunities, and 810 FHHs accessed loans.<sup>42</sup>

■ Another result of diversified livelihoods was that women and families were able to more consistently pay school fees (from elementary school) and one woman beneficiary was also able to support her son with payment for medical school.

■ Women also shared they had increased food security for their families with the improved agricultural yields from the restored landscape, in addition to the income from the hired work activities.

■ The project linked 107 youth (68 women, 39 men) to Vocational Training Centers for acquiring new skills training in carpentry, metalwork, and bricklaying. While promoting off-farm jobs and income, with potential for more profitability and economic security, it also benefits the fragile ecosystems to be restored sustainably and improve the quantity and quality of natural resources.

■ 200 family beneficiaries are relocated and provided cows, biogas digesters, and rainwater-harvesting tanks at the new green village settlement.<sup>43</sup> Women and girls reported their time spent in fetching water for the household had reduced from one hour to less than thirty minutes after 3 years of the project.<sup>44</sup> The biogas digesters installed in the green village settlement have also positively impacted women in the community because of the easy access to energy to prepare food and water, with the co-benefits of improving their and their family's respiratory health, while eliminating time spent in collecting fuelwood.

### Lessons Learned

**Engagement of the NWC provides robust information on the national and local level gender context and dynamics, as well as provided information on which key stakeholders to engage at various levels.** The consultation with the NWC during the initial phase of this project enhanced the gender analysis which informed the project design. Sustained engagement, with feedback throughout the projects, coupled with quality evaluations of the human dimensions of the project continue to advance the intersectional community relations, including gender equality.

**Promoting gender parity among project staff and implementers, along with training of staff and project implementers on gender had positive implications for the inputs and outputs of the project.** This also inherently

contributes to continued representation of women in decision-making for project activities, and can also increase the perspective and priorities of women and gender-responsive approaches at all levels (national to local), from project planning to implementation.

**Vocational training advanced economic prospects of youth, but could be better tied with the project initiative, and needs to ensure completion.** For example, multiple biogas digesters have broken and cannot be used anymore, because training was focused on installation not repairing units. Since the biogas digesters are a new technology, the women, men and youth in the village do not have the specialized skills to repair them or provide regular maintenance to prevent breakdowns. This, however, provides an opportunity to advance the training skills of the local youth (including female youth) on how to maintain and repair the systems for maximum use and sustained impact.

43. PPR3. Rwanda.

44. PPR3. Rwanda.

# Seychelles: Ecosystem Based Adaptation to Climate Change in Seychelles, implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), US\$6,455,750

Seychelles. Improved water availability to ensure sustainable ecosystem services. Photo by United Nations Development Program

## Project Background

Climate projections for the Seychelles show that rainfall will increase overall in the future, but is becoming increasingly irregular. On islands where the topography has limited water infrastructure development and large-water storage capacity, this occurrence of precipitation coming in short bursts increases the risk of heavy flooding during the wet season, while creating extended drought during the dry season.

The Seychelle island communities' dependence on the rainfall, along with infrastructure limitations—which will only be exacerbated by the irregular precipitation—encouraged UNDP and the Executing Entity, Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change (MEECC), to propose a project to reduce the risk of water scarcity and flooding through ecosystem based adaptive measures. The project aims to reduce the vulnerability of communities by rehabilitating the two largest islands' watersheds and coastal environments to address the water shortages, flooding, and coastal surge exacerbated during storms.

## Strategies Employed

The project proposed to address gender inequalities through: (a) improving water supply and reducing the household burdens imposed on women during periods of drought, (b) ensuring equal opportunity for women and men to participate on local watershed committees, and (c) promoting gender balance in the proposed training programme.<sup>45</sup>

Aiming to directly tackle the provision of water to the most vulnerable, this project took into consideration intersectional social dimensions, including gender, and age among the poorest groups in the targeted communities. This included identifying a wide range of stakeholders to consult and engage including those that had interest in the project themes (including local NGOs and associations). The project ensured gender balance across the consultations undertaken, and engaged among others, women's watershed groups in project discussions. Planning, trainings and evaluations are geared toward increasing awareness and skills, and securing sustainable benefits for the associations and individuals.<sup>46</sup>

In developing the watershed management plans, community watershed committees were established and supported specifically through the recruitment of a Community Engagement Specialist. The Specialist ensured diverse perspectives and interests were engaged, with women from

the communities encouraged to participate in the committees and decision-making, and also receive training provided.

Women and men from the communities and Committees have been trained to develop new skills to support restoration activities and receive remuneration, as well as on good governance and advocacy skills as community-based organizations, building both individual and institutional capacity.<sup>47</sup> The project also trained women and male students from the University of Seychelles on plant identification, monitoring of stream flow, and how to assess multiple factors contributing to drainage, and ecosystem-based adaptation.<sup>48</sup>

Recently, teachers on the islands have also been engaged to build their capacity on climate change, as part of the development of a national curriculum guide for primary five to secondary five classes. The curriculum guide will build the awareness of girls and boys and the public on climate issues, impacts, and solutions, and support youth engagement in current and future responses.<sup>49</sup>

## Achievements

■ The four watershed committees established have strong representation of women, with two Committees designating a woman as their Chairperson. Largely facilitated by the support of the Community Engagement Specialist who has brought new dynamism to the process, the four committees demonstrate increased gender equity, with both women and men reportedly having a voice and actively involved in the project as they learn how to become stewards of their water resources.<sup>50 51</sup>

■ 52 women and 43 men from the communities and Committees have received training in forest and wetland rehabilitation techniques, including: identification and removal of invasive species, planting native species, and sharing information on the approaches among other community members in fora.<sup>52</sup>

■ 16 female and 4 male University students were trained on diverse watershed and coastal rehabilitation, and relevant geo-engineering skills, building their capacity to calculate and assess needs for water catchment and drainage systems in the ecosystem and communities.<sup>53</sup> A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with MEECC for long-term collaboration on the project, with the University students providing follow-up monitoring and assessments of the restoration of the watershed.<sup>54</sup>

45. PPR 1. Seychelles.

46. PPR 1. Seychelles.

47. MTR. Seychelles.

48. PPR 4. Seychelles

49. Bonnelame, Betymie. 2019. Teachers in Seychelles to get new climate change curriculum guide focusing on island nation's situation. Seychelles News Agency. <http://www.seychellesnewsagency.com/articles/10367/Teachers+in+Seychelles+to+get+new+climate+change+curriculum+guide+focusing+on+island+nation>

%27s+situation

50. PPR 3. Seychelles.

51. MTR. Seychelles.

52. PPR 4. Seychelles.

53. PPR 4. Seychelles.

54. MTR. Seychelles.

Measures to prevent coastal erosion in Mauritius through mangrove restoration.  
Photo by the Adaptation Fund



■ The gender equitable watershed committees established in this project played a key role in piloting devolved watershed management approaches. These committees were highlighted at national policy level with the experiences and results integrated in the development of the National Water Policy (2017), and in the initial steps of drafting a legal framework for a new Water Act.<sup>55</sup>

### Lessons Learned

**Broad stakeholder engagement encouraged participation of often marginalized groups and a gender balance of community participants, to provide diverse input in issues, perspectives and leadership skills contributing to ownership of the project, and sustainable outputs.**

**Intergenerational engagement and training provided a platform for university students, the majority of which were women, to build their knowledge on ecosystem-based adaptation approaches, with technical skills-training to advance their role and potential careers in a technical field relevant to climate change.**<sup>56</sup> Dedicated support to continue this training of additional cohorts with women and men candidates will influence future careers and success in national climate-response measures through more diverse ownership, through the advancement of women in STEM fields.

**Gender-disaggregated indicators and -responsive monitoring are critical for collecting data relevant to social and economic components of the projects, to inform the dynamic inputs and outcomes of activities.** Building the capacity of Executing Entities and project staff on the need and benefits of this, drives more comprehensive information to build on, and guide re-design or additional activities to advance for more sustainable projects and results, including toward women's empowerment and gender equality.<sup>57</sup>

55. PPR 3. Seychelles.

56. PPR 4. Seychelles.

57. MTR. Seychelles.



Rehabilitation of  
McKinnon watershed in  
Antigua and Barbuda.  
Photo by Adaptation Fund

## Challenges and Opportunities

The Adaptation Fund has consistently and increasingly demonstrated its recognition and support for integrating a gender-responsive approach as a climate finance mechanism, and within climate adaptation projects and programmes.

The successes of these select AF projects in mainstreaming gender were grounded in several common elements: awareness raising efforts; identification of gender inequalities through gender assessment, and associated gender-specific activities; informational workshops designed to build women's and men's capacity to climate change; skills training for women and men promoting diversified income opportunities; efforts that engaged and built community leadership and ownership; and collaboration, and coherence-building on issues for gender equality and environmental and social management through alliances and associations. One of the three pillars of the MTS, Learning and Sharing, is dedicated to advancing knowledge and dispersal on different topics, such as gender and social inclusion, to inform better project planning, management, governance systems, implementation and monitoring. Lessons learned from the select projects related to gender mainstreaming methodologies, tools, and trainings could help the Fund achieve such a goal of the MTS pillar, if they could be applied across diverse geographies and political landscapes, in other Adaptation Fund single-country and regional (multi-country) projects, as well as other climate initiatives.

While these select projects have garnered positive results, there are still challenges, which could have placed limitations on the projects that are essential to lesson learning and sharing. These challenges and inherent limitations depend on a variety of factors from the context of the project and enabling environment, to capacity, or political will. Although projects in different countries do not often face the exact same challenges, the case studies presented identified some similar and recurrent issues which could have limited thorough gender mainstreaming, and thus the benefits of enhancing gender equality in climate initiatives for enhanced adaptation outcomes.

- The select projects demonstrated success at the household level, however, women's participation in development of climate policies and plans at the community level, was reported in several of the select projects as significantly lower than men, which could have limited women's role in decision-making and capacity building to participate and be empowered in these processes, and more broadly beyond those projects.<sup>58</sup>

- Vulnerability profiles and gender assessments at project onset were not systematically integrated, or robust in the select projects, which could have limited the expansion of

integrated gender-responsive approaches. Increasing initial, and continuing gender assessments, would have supported acceleration of tactful gender-responsive activities tailored to the needs and priorities for groups to access benefits.

- Capacity on gender issues was varied in Implementing Entities and Executing Entities and was often focused on small-scale interventions that did not necessarily identify or target systemic inequality drivers. Enhancing Entities' capacity on gender considerations, gender-responsive actions and comprehensive project monitoring will support project staff in recognizing that adaptation activities are not gender-neutral. The project staff with this capacity have the potential to facilitate advancements via the adaptation projects in adaptive capacity, as well as gender and social equality.

- Supporting projects with a gender specialist, or even a gender focal point, has been intermittent, limiting expert knowledge on gender dynamics, or provision of advice on gender-responsive practices or sufficient integration in projects. This could have resulted in a fragmented, compartmentalized, and scattered vision to projects' implementation for a thoroughly gender-responsive approach. This in turn could have limited comprehensive and effective gender equality outcomes beyond women as project participants, or economic beneficiaries.

- In some select projects, national and sub-national women's groups, gender experts, and gender-related institutions and organizations have not been effectively engaged from planning to implementation, or in monitoring of projects. When projects engage these groups and organizations with gender expertise, they have demonstrated activities that are more inclusive with progress on women's empowerment and adaptive capacity. Some of the select projects which had such engagement showed that the engagement was more piecemeal in its approach rather than in a well-mainstreamed way. Additionally, this was only at a local level, thus not elevating these local-level good practices and priorities to the national level—such as in broader climate adaptation planning and policy.

- Risk was found in some of the select projects where gender-disaggregated indicators of activities are captured and reported on inadequately. Reporting on all indicators needs to be robust. Additionally, it is desirable that indicators move beyond counting women and men as static data points (particularly in participation or increased income), but to provide information which can assess women's effective

leadership, roles in decision-making, and gender dynamics on engagement, economic and social empowerment. This robust monitoring can drive an iterative process in the project cycle toward more transformative change.

This review of the select Adaptation Fund projects case studies indicates that integrating gender elements in project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation has had multifaceted benefits. It demonstrates appropriate practices, as well as the challenges and limitations, with learning and opportunities for increasing gender mainstreaming efforts and outcomes as an iterative process in current projects, and in future initiatives. The Adaptation Fund is in a unique position as a finance mechanism already implementing practices and generating results of gender mainstreaming to utilize this information moving forward as an implementer of the Paris Agreement in its own operationalization, as well as sharing this knowledge with other finance mechanisms and funding channels to scale-up practices that are working, and address challenges.

58. PPR Mongolia 2014.